



**APPROVED
SUMMARIZED MINUTES**

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, September 19, 2019

**KIVA – CITY HALL
3939 N. DRINKWATER BOULEVARD
SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85251**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Transportation Commission to order at 5:15 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Pamela Iacovo, Vice Chair
Don Anderson
George Ertel
Michael Kuzel
B. Kent Lall

ABSENT: Barry Graham, Chair

STAFF: Daniel Alire, Transportation Representative
Greg Davies, Senior Transportation Planner
Joan Freeman, Senior transportation Representative
Ratna Korepella, Principal Transit Planner
Dan Worth, Executive Director, Public Works

GUESTS: Ron Brooks, Valley Metro
Audra Koester Thomas, MAG
Daniel Alire
Louise Lamb
Joan Freeman

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair invited public comments. Dan Worth, Executive Director, Public Works, announced that Paul Basha and Lisa Johnson no longer work for the City.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the Transportation Commission – August 15, 2019

Vice Chair Iacovo commented that the minutes failed to include the introduction of Kiran Guntupalli as the new principal traffic engineer.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION ON AUGUST 15, 2019 AS AMENDED. COMMISSIONER KUZEL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 5-0 WITH VICE CHAIR IACOVO AND COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ERTEL, KUZEL AND LALL VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE WITH NO DISSENTING VOTES.

5. TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION BYLAWS

Vice Chair Iacovo called for a motion on the bylaws, which were discussed at the previous meeting.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION BYLAWS. COMMISSIONER ERTEL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 5-0 WITH VICE CHAIR IACOVO AND COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON, ERTEL, KUZEL AND LALL VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE WITH NO DISSENTING VOTES.

6. ADA MANDATED PARATRANSIT & ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Ratna Korepella, Principal Transit Planner introduced Ron Brooks, Valley Metro. Ms. Korepella discussed that paratransit is a shared door-to-door service intended to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Paratransit is intended to meet the transportation needs of people with disabilities who are ADA certified and cannot access Valley Metro's route bus or light rail. The City of Scottsdale receives federal funds and in turn is federally mandated that to provide paratransit service within the minimum mandated service area, which is a three-quarter mile buffer around any existing bus route. Any changes to transit automatically affect the paratransit service area.

Significant changes were made to Scottsdale service on October 22nd, 2018, including the addition of trolley services extended north of Camelback Road. Modifications and replacements were also made to several other routes with citizens notified in advance of the upcoming changes. These changes necessitated modifications to the paratransit service in Scottsdale. Residents will have another option, RideChoice, in addition to the already existing Cab Connection service. Effective July 1, 2019, Scottsdale is strictly enforcing the mandated ADA paratransit service area. This includes elimination of same-day non-ADA paratransit trips. Cost to the rider is \$4 per trip and cost to the City is \$48.

RideChoice includes options of taxis, Uber, and wheelchair accessible vehicle providers. Riders may take up to 20 trips per month. If the rider is using the service for work, school or medical reasons, they may request an additional 30 vouchers per month. Customers pay \$3 for the first eight miles and \$2 for each additional mile. Participants must be ADA certified.

Cab Connection is a subsidized taxi ride program. Qualified riders must be either ADA certified or be 65 or older. Participants receive 20 vouchers per month with the City paying 80 percent of the fare to a maximum of \$10. That average cost to the rider is \$1.80 and cost to the City is \$7.20. Dialysis patients are subsidized 100 percent.

For the Wheels to Meals program, if the rider is within five miles of Granite Reef Senior Center, the fare is 100 percent covered. Similarly, round trips are provided in partnership with Foothills Caring Corps for van trips as strictly a taxi-type service. While RideChoice and Cab Connection are similar, RideChoice riders must be ADA certified. If participants are ADA certified, they must choose between RideChoice and Cab Connection and may not utilize vouchers from both programs.

Commissioner asked whether these options will continue as structured or whether a program such as RideChoice or Cab Connection would eventually take over services for the entire City. Mr. Brooks provided background on the reason that there is more than one program. The Federal ADA creates the requirement for ADA paratransit. The law is very specific in terms of parameters and requirements, including: Being unlimited, no trip priorities, drivers and vehicles must meet certain requirements. This results in expensive service. In the past, paratransit service was provided on extended basis, including far north. The goal was to provide more flexible, affordable service in areas that do not currently have a mandate. RideChoice was developed to be this alternative. It is anticipated that the two programs will continue. ADA paratransit will always be available where required by law. It is assumed that RideChoice will continue to operate on a citywide basis.

In terms of the comparison between RideChoice and Cab Connection, there are a number of Scottsdale residents who have used Cab Connection for a long time. For extremely short trips, it is cheaper to the customer to use. As such, a decision was made allow riders to choose to stay in the Cab Connection Program. The program will likely continue so long as there are still customers actively using it.

Commissioner inquired as to how the City or Valley Metro certifies and validates vehicle operators of ride share vehicles and their companies. Mr. Brooks clarified that Valley Metro paratransit is contracted service. Valley Metro does not own the vehicles. The drivers are employed by the contractor. RideChoice includes a variety of providers, including ride share, taxi and wheelchair accessible vehicle providers. Customers may choose between providers. Valley Metro does not individually inspect vehicles or drivers. The State of Arizona has statutes which govern the rules for taxi providers, ride share providers and other commercial carriers. The contractor is required to ensure that before a provider is added to the program, they are in compliance with state statutes.

Commissioner asked about changes in ridership since the changes were introduced. Mr. Brooks said there are only two off-season months of data to analyze at this time. However, paratransit demand, which was increasing month over month is now flat and Ride Choice ridership is increasing steadily week over week. Better analysis will be available in the coming months.

Commissioner expressed appreciation that they have sought out ways to be more efficient in providing comparable service.

Discussion ensued regarding liability and insurance requirements. Mr. Brooks stated that the contract includes language that gives contractors first dollar responsibility for claims. The agreement includes indemnification language between Scottsdale and Valley Metro.

Commissioner asked whether all providers must carry the same amount of insurance, i.e. Uber drivers versus paratransit providers. Mr. Brooks acknowledged that he is not an expert on the State statute. Commercial carriers must carry insurance at levels required by the state. However, Valley Metro does not contract directly with the drivers. American Logistics essentially serves as the broker, including operating the call center. American Logistics books trips based on the provider chosen by the rider and manages the subcontracting relationships.

In response to a question from Vice Chair, Mr. Brooks stated that in terms of liability and beyond the language of the IGA, it is not appropriate for him as a non-attorney to comment. However, they do have language that protects all parties involved, at least initially. He does not recall a significant claim during the past six years. The language makes the contractor responsible for its own actions or omissions.

Commissioner asked for clarification that ADA paratransit requires booking at least one day in advance. Mr. Brooks stated that the law requires trips be booked on a next day basis. However, agencies are allowed to provide same-day service. The City of Scottsdale has historically provided the ability for customers to book paratransit on a same day basis. When the City made the decision to join RideChoice (same day service), it was felt that there was not a need to retain same day paratransit, which is expensive and operationally difficult.

Mr. Brooks stated that beginning October 1, they are implementing an option with the RideChoice program (Scottsdale has elected to participate), whereby instead of receiving an allotment of trips each month, customers who make longer trips can receive an allotment of miles. It equates to the number of miles they would have gotten and is basically a mileage bank.

7. REGIONAL VALUES MAPPING RESULTS & UPDATE ON THE EXTENSION OF PROPOSITION 400

Audra Koester Thomas, Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), stated that MAG is the designated transportation planning agency and programming authority for the region. MAG is looking to develop a new regional transportation plan to inform the extension of a local sales tax to further fund transportation investments in Maricopa County. Proposition 400 was passed in 2005 and Proposition 300 was passed in 1985. The tax extension expires on December 31st of 2025. MAG completed mapping over the past eight to nine months to address the key elements of the regional transportation plan, goals and objectives. The process begins in September, with the Transportation Policy Committee at MAG, the body responsible by state statute for developing the regional transportation plan. The Committee is comprised of mayors and members of the business community. There was input from a wide range of interests, including focus groups and public surveys.

In terms of the survey results, the responses were summarized as follows:

Identify top choices of what people liked most:

- Good freeway network
- Well-connected, easy to get around
- Variety of options
- Well-maintained roads
- Overall safe transportation system
- Well-planned for growth
- Grid roadway network
- Light rail system
- New housing close to public transportation
- The airport
- Bus system
- Cleanliness of freeways
- HOV and carpool lanes
- Bike and bike path lanes

For the quantitative survey, respondents were asked to tell a story about their experiences. Sample responses were as follows:

- I can get from home to work in about 20 minutes because of the great freeway system. There's a lot of traffic, but there are a lot of lanes to help alleviate that. I don't have to rush in the morning. I get to eat breakfast with my daughter and spend time with my wife. It's nice not having to rush to start my day annoyed; that gives me peace of mind.
- I know a lot of people that use the light rail or busses to get to work every day and it really is a must for the big city that Phoenix has become. Without the transportation system in place, there would be no flexibility or a way to accomplish anything for those without their own cars. It makes me happy, because I have the freedom of choosing the mode of transportation I need.

Respondents also listed the items needing improvement:

- Traffic congestion
- Too much road construction
- Poorly timed traffic lights
- Poorly maintained roads
- Public transportation is too slow or not frequent enough
- Not enough light rail routes
- Poorly planned for growth
- Lack of transportation options
- This is a car-centric region
- Lack of safe and secure public transit
- Not enough east/west connectivity
- Not enough bus routes
- Roads are unsafe
- Not enough bike and pedestrian paths
- Busses are too full or crowded

A sample of shared stories includes:

- Most of the time, you have to catch at least three different busses to make it to work and there's usually at 15-minute drive and take close to two hours on the bus system. I feel frustrated because it's inconvenient to have to put that much time into going and coming home from work. It's four hours, combined with six different buses, that if I drove, it would only be 15 to 20 minutes. I'm not as happy as I should be. The frustration of being helpless takes away from my happiness.
- The impact of traffic congestion is that productive individuals are forced to sit for extended periods of time and in an environment that is nonproductive and potentially dangerous. Drivers caught in this environment feel isolated, powerless and frustrated with this situation.

When asked about long-range planning, approximately 25 percent prefer a flexible approach, another 25 percent stated that they wanted an exact, defined approach and 50 percent said their opinion was a mix of flexibility and defined. This was interpreted to mean that planning could include opportunities for big projects, while developing programmatic structures to make necessary changes. There was overwhelming agreement that defining investment is a regional priority. A majority of responses stated that there should be a small to large increase in transportation funding. A majority also wanted to see an increase in funding relative to safety and technology.

Other priorities include increased capacity, road maintenance and operations as well as rail maintenance, new rail construction, busses and bus network, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, new street construction. MAG's goal is to have a conversation with the legislature regarding enabling them to go back to the Board of Supervisors to request a ballot placement in the future for Maricopa County voters to consider a portfolio. MAG is targeting a November, 2022 election date. There will be a two-year planning process for development of the regional transportation plan, including a federal air quality conforming process.

Commissioner noted that the survey had 9,200 responses and asked for input as to the level of satisfaction on participation level. Ms. Koester Thomas stated that there was consistency between the scientifically valid sample and sample size, providing confidence that the numbers can be amplified to represent the overall consensus. MAG was thrilled with the level of response. Safety is a priority for respondents to the survey. Individuals in the West Valley identified it more often than those in the East Valley.

Commissioner noted the discrepancy in regard to funding for bicycle and pedestrian funding. While it ranks as a low priority, there is interest in increasing funding. Ms. Koester Thomas stated that when asked a separate question about bike and pedestrian infrastructure, 50 percent of respondents say that funding should be increased.

Commissioner asked about the dynamic of identifying rail as a preferred mode of transportation while cities such as Scottsdale are totally set against any form of rail construction. Ms. Koester Thomas made the point that not all modes fit all cities. Light rail works only in certain kinds of areas: Dense, easily accessible, within walking distance, connected to major activity nodes or centers. In terms of transit investments, MAG requires a partnership with local jurisdictions. Cities not interested in having a light rail investment will never have one without such a partnership. As the core areas densify, there continue to be opportunities for high capacity transit as the best ways to move people efficiently.

Vice Chair commented that Arizona has not increased its gas tax since 1991 and suggested that this merits consideration. More fuel-efficient cars and increased bicycle riding have taken a toll on the amounts collected.

Vice Chair stated that she prefers Prop 400E versus Prop 500, as this truly is just an extension of a sales tax already in place since 1984. She asked what the half-cent equates to. Ms. Koester Thomas said that for Proposition 400, total funding from 2005 through December 31st of 2025 is approximately \$8.5 billion. This is 40 percent less than projected. The cumulative loss resulted in the deferral of many projects.

Vice Chair asked about the decision-making process for which cities are members of MAG. Ms. Koester Thomas stated that membership is voluntary with MAG being established via federal legislation approximately 55 years ago.

Vice Chair noted that Scottsdale did pass its bond for the sale tax election to ensure that the City receives its match for the remaining 400 funds.

8. OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS AND PROGRAM STATUS

Mr. Worth discussed intersection improvements in the area of Via Linda and Via de Ventura. McCormick Ranch HOA performed some landscaping improvements in their medians, including narrowing and removal of materials to enhance visibility. Another small-scale project was undertaken at Mountain View and Scottsdale Road just east of Chaparral High School. To address eastbound traffic coming out of Mountain View, the left turn lane was lengthened to allow greater capacity.

The Drinkwater Boulevard underpass has been closed for approximately a year to address serious degradation that was threatening the bridge structure. The engineer designed a load-bearing wall running down the middle of the median. Scottsdale Public Art will be installing public art on the white walls in an adjacent area to the underpass. The superstructure is still largely closed off, as the contractor is installing a new waterproofing membrane to protect the substructure and a perimeter drainage system. The construction will include limited turf areas and concrete pathways. The upper bridge deck portion will be open for full use in early November.

Mr. Worth addressed the widening of Loop 101, which will add a general purpose lane in each direction from I-17 to Pima Road and will include closure times. There will also be closures in October (one day for northbound and one day for southbound) on the 101 for maintenance work between Shea and the southern City limit to Loop 202.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Louise Lamb addressed the goal of getting more people to ride bicycles to work, suggesting that if employers installed showers, more people would be willing to commute to work via bicycle.

10. COMMISSION IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner noted that during the last meeting, he requested that the Commission look at the costs savings of withdrawing the City's membership from MAG and what it would cost to develop in-house expertise. Commissioner also addressed parking issues at Museum Square. Mr. Worth stated that a parking study for the Downtown area was completed in approximately 2014. It identified some areas of stress in terms of capacity. The Planning Commission has expressed an interest in looking at parking as it relates to required parking for zoning amendment approvals. A discussion is tentatively planned for November. There is also a \$21 million project on the proposed bond list to address Downtown parking. Vice Chair suggested that a member of the Commission be present for the discussions with Council. Commissioner stated that he would be attending.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved by Commissioner Ertel and seconded by Commissioner Anderson, the meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

AYES: Chair Graham, Vice Chair Iacovo, Commissioners Ertel, Anderson, Kuzel and Lall.

NAYS: None

SUBMITTED BY:

eScribers, LLC

***Note: These are summary action meeting minutes only. A complete copy of the audio/video recording is available at <http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/boards/transp.asp>**